Development of tourist centres in the country

1833. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY:
PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR:
SHRI ANAND SHARMA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to have a series of joint projects with the U.S. National Park Service in planning, protection and development of major tourist centres in India;

(b) If so, what are the details of these projects and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that the services of U.S.A. are being taken to design a new layout for the development of gardens outside the Taj Mahal and for developing the Holy Buddhist site at Sarnath; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism in consultation with the Ministries of Home Affairs, External Affairs, Finance, Archaeological Survey of India, etc. have decided to utilise the services of the National Park Service, U.S.A. in collaboration with INTACH and the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad in the following three projects:—

(i) US-India cooperation in planning for Taj Mahal National Park

(ii) Joint Tourism Planning of a selected Buddhist site

(iii) Joint training of Tourist guides in interpretive skills and techniques at National and Cultural Sites.

These projects offer enormous potential for attracting additional tourists and therefore, deserve to be developed on a priority basis.

(c) and (d) It is not correct to say that Govt. of India have asked U.S. National Park Service to design a new layout for gardens that surround the Taj Mahal. There is no proposal to touch the existing gardens. Most of the area to be covered is prone to erosion and has already become the victim of unplanned development. Any further delay in its development can result in more encroachment and haphazard growth which would make the task of planning touristic infrastructure at a later date more difficult.

Ministry of Tourism have also taken up a proposal to develop different places associated with the life of Lord Buddha spread over U.P. and Bihar. Thus there is a need to take the services of a specialist in landscaping design and site planning at Sarnath so as to recreate, to the extent possible, the original ethos prevailing at the famous site where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon.

Import of coconut oil

1834. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of coconut oil imported during the last three years through the STC under the Open General Licence; year-wise; and

(b) the price at which coconut oil was imported per tonne each year?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) The STC has not imported any coconut oil during the last three oil years.

(b) Does not arise.